

Hamilton sets off holiday season with tree lighting

Story and photos by
 Bruce Hill

Rudolph might be a little jealous. Even with his bright, shiny, red nose, he's got nothing on the the New York City Fire Department who delivered Santa Claus with a bang atop a loud, blaring, brightly lit, red fire truck Dec 5.

Shortly before his anticipated arrival, the crowd withstood the chilly weather and sang Christmas carols with shivering legs and warm hearts as they waited for the guest of honor.

Greeted with rock-star status, dozens of kids anxiously waited as Santa was slowly lower by the truck's ladder. Children quickly swarmed him as he stepped down to meet his awaiting fans who joined him to light the Fort Hamilton Christmas tree to kick-off this year's holiday season.

Soon after, Santa made his way inside to take photos and give gifts to the children.

The Fire Department of New York City serves as Roudolph and Santa's sleigh as Santa waves and greets dozens of anxious kids.



Treated like a rock-star, Santa is mobbed by dozens of kids who can't wait to hug him and help him light the Fort Hamilton Christmas Tree.



Santa's new elves?

Soldiers from the 152nd Military Police Company act as Santa Claus's helpers as they pick up thousands of toys, mostly stuffed animals, from the U.S. Army Depot in Brooklyn to be delivered to thousands of kids throughout the country, including those of Soldiers, just in time for Christmas. The toys were donated by the U.S. Balloon Company of Brooklyn, N.Y. (Photo by Bruce Hill)





Teri Lam, 4, whose father was recently killed in Iraq, helps Santa give out toys to Jonathan Diaz, 8, and almost 200 other kids who attend this year's Christmas party at the Sport and Fitness Center.



Santa Claus and The Brooklyn Eagle mascot each brought the kids cheer.



Festive party garnerers much joyful attention

It's that time of year again when the season for giving, thanking and celebrating unity. More than 200 kids and adults attended this year's annual Children's Christmas party at the Sport and Fitness Center and youth center to help kick off the joyful season. Santa Claus was joined by the USO Troupe, who sang a host of Christmas medleys, and the mascot from the Brooklyn Eagle. More than 200 gifts were donated and given to children this year.

Dozens of kids patiently wait their turn to sit on Santa's knee and get their surprise gift from him.



Hundreds of gift were donated for this year's Christmas party.



Santa, right, picks a number in the raffle for Christmas door prizes at the youth center.



Push ups for toys

Sgt. 1st Class Tony Gonzalez, first sergeant for the 152nd Military Police Company, demonstrates to the students of P.S. 506 Elementary School how to do a proper push up. That was but one of the many questions the students asked when they visited and delivered toys for children of Soldiers Dec. 12. The journalism students also toured the Fort Hamilton Museum and held a mock press conference to ask Gonzalez, Chap. Doyle Coffman, Sgt. Tracy Fenner and Spec. Erica Martinez questions about the Army and their personal thoughts about serving. (Photo by Bruce Hill)



An early Christmas gift

Col. Steve Smith, garrison commander, accepts an early Christmas gift from bank manager Isabella Masters Dec. 13 at the grand opening of TD Bank located just blocks away from Fort Hamilton. The bank donated \$500 to Fort Hamilton just in time for Christmas as Smith in turn welcome the bank to the community. Smith joins other bank executives as they perform the ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening. (Photo by Bruce Hill)



Fort Hamilton announcements

Holiday Driving Safety

As we approach the biggest holiday period of the year, the weekend before and the week after Christmas to the New Year – many people will travel on the highways than ever before, to fit in all they can with family and friends during this holiday period. Many on the road will not adhere to basic driving safety precautions. They will drive while fatigued, without seatbelts or under the influence of alcohol. Sometimes we forget the basic safety precautions and many people will become an accident death statistic, while others will suffer disabling and painful injuries. It doesn't have to be that way – follow the "Golden Rule of Safe Driving" – stay alert when driving and use seat belts. Regular use of safety precautions and safety techniques will ensure a safe Holiday Season!

101st Gate Open 24/7

Inbound and outbound traffic at the 101st Gate is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can be exited straight from General Lee Avenue Monday through Friday from 4:30 p.m. through 6 a.m. and from 4:30 p.m. Friday through 6 a.m. Monday. All other times, exit through 101st Gate is only from Sterling Drive. The 7th Avenue Gate is open daily from 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. to outbound traffic only but open to inbound and outbound walk-in traffic for Fort Hamilton residents and DOD card holders Monday through Friday 6 - 9:30 a.m. Inbound access is from 4-7 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Holiday Fire Safety

With this joyous holiday season upon us once again, each of us should take a moment from our busy schedule to follow these fire safety tips and ensure our memories of this year's holiday can remain happy ones.

All kinds of holiday lights and displays spring up everywhere at this time of year. Decorations that require electricity require care when they are set up. Remember not to overload your circuits by plugging in too many lines in the same wall socket. If you really need to use an extension cord, make sure it is heavy duty so that it will not overheat and cause a fire.

Candles are beautiful to look at and some even give off the scents that remind us of the season. Keep all candles clear of anything that might catch fire such as table decorations and curtains. Do not hang anything above the burning candles because the heat will rise and it could ignite. Also remember to keep candles out of the reach of children and pets. When it is possible, maybe an electric candle or chemical light stick will have the same effect.

A big bulky sweater or sweat shirt feels great as the temperature drops. Be extra careful around open flames whenever you wear loose fitting clothing. Also be careful around any space heaters or other appliances you may use during the colder weather. Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires and rises to first during the winter months.

Everyone loves the wonderful aroma and taste of those special holiday dishes. When baking and

cooking, remember to keep your young ones clear of anything that may be hot. Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of three feet (1 meter) around the stove. Keep pets from underfoot so you do not trip while cooking. Also, keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner. Always keep a potholder, oven mitt and lid handy. If a small fire starts in a pan on the stove, put on an oven mitt and smother the flames by carefully sliding the lid over the pan. Turn off the burner. Don't remove the lid until it is completely cool. Never pour water on a grease fire and never discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire, as it can spray or shoot burning grease around the kitchen, actually spreading the fire. If there is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you and your clothing.

If you are using extra appliances, spread them around to different electrical lines to avoid overheating the wiring or blowing fuses. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires. While I hope you are a good host, don't forget that food on your stove.

"A Sister's Christmas Wish"

The children of Fort Hamilton will perform the stage play "A Sister's Christmas Wish" written by Marisa Sampson and Allison Duncan on Dec. 23 at 8 p.m. at the post theater. For more information, please call (704) 408-0006.

St. Joseph's College of NY

School of Professional and Graduate Studies will be conducting classes at Fort Hamilton for the upcoming Spring semester 2009

SJC is a participating member of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges and a new member of SOCAD. It has reduced tuition of \$250 per semester credit hour for active duty, national guard and reserve as well as dependents of active duty up to nine credits per semester. The classes offered at Fort Hamilton will go towards a Bachelor of Science Degree in Organizational Management.

The following classes will be offered.

BUS 130 Organizational Behavior - Three credits, Mondays, Feb. 2 – May 18, 2009 from 6 – 8:50 p.m.

BUS 130 is an introduction to the study of management theory concerning human behavior in formal organizations. The student is given the opportunity to test theories through the analysis and discussion of a series of case studies.

GS 401 Problem Solving for Professionals-Three credits, Wednesdays, Feb. 4 – May 20, 2009 6-8:50 p.m.

This course focuses on the methodology of problem solving. Emphasis is placed on the application of various problem-solving models to life experience problems as well as to professional problems. Students will be asked to contribute problems from their own experience for analysis.

St. Joseph's College will be in the Army Education Center, Building 218A from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Jan. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29. For more information,

please contact John Keenan at (718) 399-2745 jkeenan@sjcny.edu.

Latkes And A Movie

Bring the family, a friend or at the very least yourself. We'll be cooking up latkes in the Chapel at Fort Wadsworth Dec. 20. Latkes are the fried potatoes pancakes made during Chanukah. Whether you want to learn how to make a latke or just want to hangout, meet new people and learn about how you can celebrate and enjoy this holiday, all are welcome. After we make and eat them, we'll be showing Comedy Central's original movie, "The Hebrew Hammer." Transportation will leave from Fort Hamilton at 12:40 p.m. and the fun starts at about 1 p.m. The van will return to Fort Hamilton after the movie.

Civilian Fitness Program

Federal employees can get a full body assessment and cardiovascular/strength training personalized program at the Sports and Fitness Center beginning in January. The six-month program requires verbal and written supervisory approval to register! Registration will be Jan. 5 - 9. Participants will get work out and dietary updates to maintain a healthy body. All initial and final assessments are scheduled by the fitness program specialist. For more information, please call the Fitness Center at (718) 630-4793

Community Activities Center

The New Jersey Nets will take on the Miami Heat Dec. 20 from 5 - 11 p.m. Have laughs at Rodney Dangerfield's Comedy Dec. 21 from 5 - 11:30 p.m. for \$15 plus a two drink minimum. Transportation to and from each event will be provided. For more information, call Rodney Boyd at (718) 630-4923.

Tell Us How We Are Doing!

The Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) is the place where you can provide us your comments and suggestions. Help us improve our community's programs and services. Log onto <http://ice.disa.mil>. Go to "CONUS" and then to "Fort Hamilton." Click on the service you wish to rate, then submit the comment. Also, you can submit comments on kiosks at various locations on the installation.

**To report sexual assault,
contact the Safe Horizon
Hotline at 1-800-621-4673.**

**To report child abuse or
domestic violence,
please call the
Military Police at
718-630-HELP (4456)**

www.hamilton.army.mil